

## **AMHERST LA PAZ CENTRO SISTER CITY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

April 2, 2012

Present: Nancy Milch, Ed Stanek, Carol and Paul Baker, Kathy Mullin, Mary Santiago, Olivia and Victoria Feyre Febonio, Liz Etheridge, Carol Wood, Lydia Vernon Jones

**Treasurer's report:** A wire was sent in January (\$3,712). The next quarter expenses are now due (\$923). The breakdown of these expenses it is approximately: student tuition (484); Julio's salary (231); electricity (199); water (11). This amount was approved by the committee. Kathy will check with Julio on these amounts.

**Books and calculators for the Library:** Mary received a list of textbooks, calculators and prices from Julio (he obtained the booklist from the school). The total is \$732.92 plus 50 for shipping. It includes about 5 of each book, 6 scientific calculators and 1 Casio. It did not include graphing calculators which are much more expensive and only used for calculus type classes (asked for by the students. Mary is planning to call the librarian to check the list of books (are they needed by the library to lend to the students?). Assuming they are, we voted to send the money. We plan to check locally for graphing calculators that are not being used by our students and send some down with Mary and Liz in June. We also decided it would be good to stamp the books with our Logo. Liz volunteered to work on this, using the Logo from the letterhead, but making the wording more legible and including Amherst, USA. Liz will work on it and send out a copy for the committee to look at before making a stamp.

**New proposal from Julio:** Julio sent more specifics about the project for scholarship students (becados) to work with the community, composting and sports team. The budget is as follows with approximate timelines:

1. Leadership training/community development (\$115)-students learn to work with people (May).
2. Becados go out to homes to educate the community (\$250)-health and environment information (May, June).
3. Learning to compost (\$210)-August.
4. Soccer program (\$400)-September.

He has the specifics spelled out in the plan including speakers, materials. The committee voted to fund the first two parts. This coordinates well with committee members going to La Paz Centro in June. We can further evaluate the project first hand and look closer at possibly funding the other parts at that time.

**New Peace Corps Worker in La Paz Centro:** Liz made contact with a new PC worker, Julie, in La Paz who has already met with Julio about working on teaching English and environmental projects. She has also met with the becados (see previous email from Liz). We are all very excited to have Julie there. She is also eager to work in Felipe Lopez with Julio and the committee. She is an excellent resource and contact for the

committee in general. We will continue the discussion as to how to involve her with sister city projects.

**Earth Day in La Paz Centro:** Julio is planning a fiesta at the Community Center for the community to celebrate earth day in early June. It will include sports games, food, piñata, presentation about the environment and movie about managing trash. We are excited to hear about this focus on the environment. Julio didn't request funds for this but the committee voted to give him \$50 to show support.

**Overhead projector:** This is a piece of equipment ("data show") that plugs into a laptop and allows the image to be projected. Julio has requested money for this. These apparently are very expensive. We wonder if there are organizations that are upgrading and may possibly donate one. Ed is going to ask UMass and Olivia is going to check at the high school. We will explore this further.

**Total amount to be wired:** The total voted on to send to Julio this month includes quarterly expenses, textbooks and calculators for the library plus delivery, first two proposals for community development project, and support for earth day is \$2,070.

**New list of scholarship students:** Julio sent us the new list of becados (school starts in January). It includes 4 new students in the first year and 2 new students in the second year and 1 in the third year. The total is still 26.

**Ligia:** Ligia is the wife of Ariel and committee member. She was appointed the Director of the Ministry of Education in La Paz Centro! We would like to recognize this honor in June with a gift. Also, we hope to contact her about our work at the library and possible projects at the library for the delegation (painting) since she has a position in the town.

**Computers:** We briefly discussed the computers at the community center which were recently cleaned. We wondered about giving them to an organization, such as the library, where they will be in a clean environment, supervised and used. This needs further discussion.

**Reusable bags:** In discussing a gift for the committee members in June, the idea of giving the cloth bags with the sister city Logo was raised by Kathy. In addition to a gift, it is a possible small sewing business and environmental project in LPC that would help reduce the use of plastic bags which often end up trashing the landscape. Lydia offered to look into a local group in Northampton which sews bags for Serios and other local markets. We were all enthusiastic about this idea.

**Adaptive equipment for the special ed school:** Liz did some more leg work on shipping the room full of therapy equipment at HEC to the school in La Paz Centro. She found an NGO to do the shipping for free but we would need one ton of materials, we would have

to crate in and get it to New Haven. We wonder if we have enough and who can use all that equipment. She will continue to explore other possibilities since that may be beyond the scope of what we can manage. At the least, some of the equipment (e.g., therapy balls) could be brought with the delegation.

**Potluck at Staneks:** Paul and Carol plan to retire to Maine this summer and will be leaving the committee. A gathering to wish them well and thank them for their service is being planned. The two dates discussed are Wednesday May 16 or Friday May 18. Anne will communicate more about this.

**Gifts for the committee trip to LPC in June:** We are considering the reusable bags for the committee members. Other ideas are welcome. Also, we need ideas for gifts for the scholarship students and Ligia.

**Next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, May 8 at 7::30.**

Minutes submitted by Nancy Milch